

Belated Recognition Came with Help from Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Washington, DC) – Today, Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez presented a Purple Heart Medal to Tomas Lozada, 78, who was a Private First Class in the U.S. Army when he was wounded in Korea nearly 60 years ago. Mr. Lozada, a resident of the Fourth Congressional District, suffered severe burns to his face and hands from an enemy grenade in combat and somehow, his sacrifice was not reflected in his official military service record. Today, that injustice was corrected.

"Mr. Lozada's service gives me particular pride," Congressman Gutierrez said at a ceremony at the Institute of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture in Chicago. "Not only is he a Chicagoan from my District, but he is Puerto Rican and the embodiment of a long tradition of service to the U.S. military from my fellow Puertoriqueños."

Mr. Lozada and the Congressman were joined by family, veterans, a JROTC Honor Guard from Chicago's Roberto Clemente High School, and the Illinois Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Daniel T. Finn.

The Congressman said the ceremony was an opportunity to recognize the contributions of

Puerto Ricans, Latinos, Chicagoans, and all Americans to our armed forces, both today and in the past.

Tomas Lozada was born in Puerto Rico in 1932. He served in the U.S. Army, in the 65th Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, a legendary Puerto Rican fighting unit that served with distinction in Korea.

Mr. Lozada was wounded by a grenade on September 30, 1951. He was treated at a hospital in Osaka, Japan before returning to his unit in Korea. He was discharged honorably as a Corporal in 1952.

His official military service record did not reflect the full measure of the sacrifice he made to his country and this was discovered in 2003 when his granddaughter, Irma Cornier, helped him apply for his military pension. She contacted Rep. Gutierrez's Chicago District Office in 2010 and the Congressman's staff helped straighten out the facts. Some records pertaining to Mr. Lozada being wounded in combat were reportedly lost in a fire at a military records facility in 1973, but after some persistent inquiries by the Congressman at the urging of Mr. Lozada's granddaughter, records showing his hospitalization in Japan eventually convinced the Department of the Army to award Mr. Lozada the Purple Heart

"There are few moments more satisfying for a Congressman than when we are helping a constituent right a wrong or when we are helping an individual get something they deserve or something they are due," the Congressman said. "It is an honor and a privilege to play a part in correcting the record and getting Mr. Lozada recognition for his service and sacrifice. He served his country honorably and heroically and he and his family deserve to be recognized for his actions."

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